

***“Serving Those Who Served”***

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Vol. 2 Issue 10

December 2001

## Oak Harbor Navy Veteran Newest VCSC



A veteran serving veterans in a five county area.

Gerald Pfannenstiel has been hired as a Veterans Community Services Coordinator (VCSC) with the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), serving counties in the 2nd Congressional District.

Covering Whatcom, Skagit, Island, San Juan and Snohomish counties, Pfannenstiel is charged with developing a comprehensive service-delivery network to assist veterans and their families fill social service-related needs. In addition, he will identify and train a network of service officers from local veterans service organizations to be "information gatherers." Together they will find and assist veterans who are either physically unable to travel to a field office or are unaware of the available benefits in his service delivery area.

"Jerry's 20 years in the U.S. Navy will serve him well working with other veterans," said Richard Stewart, VCSC Program Manager. "As a Gulf War Veteran, he has a real grasp on what they have gone through, and is a walking success story of the military's transitional program for active duty military as they prepare to leave the service."

WDVA reorganized its field

See Pfannenstiel on page 12

## Outstanding Veterans Advocates Recognized at Annual Auburn Parade

This Veterans Day, several Washington residents were honored with Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards for their contributions to Washington state's veterans and their families during the last year.

The awards - co-sponsored each year by the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) and the state Department of Veterans Affairs - recognize individuals who devote time and energy to improving the lives of Washington veterans.



VAAC Chairman Oria Berndt (right) presents Millard Beckner the Outstanding Volunteer Service Officer award.

**Millard Beckner**, of Bremerton, was honored as the Outstanding Volunteer Service Officer for 2001. Beckner retired from the U.S. Marine Corps., and has spent the last 45 years volunteering for veterans, children and his community. Although 85 years old, he still spends many hours as a volunteer service officer, helping veterans and their families.

**Diane Mende**, of Spokane, was honored as the Outstanding Service Representative. Mende has been with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Seattle since 1974, and moved to Spokane six years ago to work as a field



Diane Mende, accepts her award from VAAC member Fran Agnes.



Pam Young with her two sons, accepts her award from VAAC Chairman Oria Berndt.

**Pam and Roger Young**, of Seattle, were selected as the Outstanding Veteran Volunteers. Roger is a Vietnam veteran who served with the U.S. Army as a helicopter crew chief with the 3/17th Air Cavalry. Pam is a Vietnam-era veteran who served as a Yeoman in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to Operation Homecoming. They are the creators and editors of The Northwest Veterans Newsletter, an Internet newsletter devoted to veterans, their families and communities in the Pacific Northwest.

examiner. She has been involved with the Transition Assistance Program since its inception in 1991. In addition she focuses on claims of those leaving military service from Fairchild AFB under VA's Benefits Delivery at Discharge program.

**Richard D. Price**, of Lacey, was recognized as the Outstanding Employee. Price served more than 24 years in the U.S. Army's Infantry and Field Artillery, retiring as a First Sergeant in 1993. He serves today as the



VAAC Chairman Oria Berndt congratulates Ric Price, the 2001 Outstanding Employee.

program manager for the Veterans Services Division of WDVA, where he is responsible for the Homeless Reintegration Programs, the Homeless Women Veterans Program and the development of the statewide Incarcerated Veterans and County Veterans services.

**Ruth Cunningham**, of Spokane, was presented the 2001 Outstanding Female Non-Veteran award. Cunningham has spent the last 20 years as an instrumental part of the American Ex-Prisoners of War chapter in Spokane. Her

See Veteran Advocates on page 3

## What's Inside...

*Outstanding Veteran Advocates Honored ..... page 1*  
*Veterans Information & Assistance Fairs ..... page 3*  
*Legislative News ..... page 4*  
*Veterans Day 2001 ..... page 6*  
*Veteran Homes Highlights ..... page 8*  
*In Focus: Vietnam Veterans of America ..... page 10*  
*Employee Spotlight ..... page 11*

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**Veteran Voices** is published for Washington state veterans and their family members, WDVA employees and Veteran Home residents.

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I am excited to report that the long awaited state home construction

grant priority list was signed by Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony Principi, on November 19, 2001. As hoped, Washington State is at the top of the priority list with \$30.7 million designated for the 240-bed replacement construction project at Retsil.

Following our receipt of the letter, President Bush signed the VA budget, providing \$100 million for the State Home Construction Grant Program which will ensure our project funding, this year.

My sincere thanks and appreciation goes out to each and every one of you, whose continued efforts have made the Master Plan the viable proposal it is today. History will tell many of us how long a project can languish, waiting for approval when it needs the blessing of a governmental body. But, I think we may be re-writing history with this proposal! Not only was approval needed from the state Legislature – it was also required from the VA State Home Construction Grant Program. Remarkably, the Master Plan gained approval from both entities within a six month period!

## Master Plan Gains Approval from Federal VA and the State Legislature

While we celebrate this latest victory, keep in mind there is much work to be done. WDVA has begun holding meetings with the Governor’s Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, Veterans Legislative Committee, Commanders’ Call and all veterans interested in staying involved in the implementation of the Master Plan. In

**Washington State is at the top of the priority list with \$30.7 million designated for the 240-bed replacement construction project at Retsil.**

addition, three working groups have been established within WDVA to focus on specific details surrounding the Master Plan. I am confident we can all agree that we need to begin our deliberate planning NOW!

The three working groups are:

“ *Construction* – Focus will be on issues of program verification, construction planning, site and other environmental issues. Project Leader – Gary Condra – WDVA Budget & Special Project Manager.

“ *Project Operations* – Will study the impact various stages of

construction will have on staff, residents, and buildings. Project Leader – John Lee – WDVA Deputy Director.

“ *Orting Continuum of Care Program* – A core team will work closely with residents, staff, veterans and the greater Orting community to define the programs and services to be offered at the Orting campus. Project Leader – Jerry Towne – Soldiers Home & Colony Superintendent.

We will do our best to provide up-to-date information to you and I encourage each of you to stay involved in any way you can. It is your input and assistance that has moved the proposal to this point and with your help we will be successful in providing Washington State’s veterans the care they deserve. As you know, Washington State is entering a new era of providing services to veterans. The construction of a new 240-bed nursing facility at Retsil and the development of the Orting Program will allow WDVA and partner organizations to provide a *Continuum of Care* for the veterans we serve.

The next phase of planning will draw upon your knowledge and skills to develop methods for construction, operations and the new mission for Orting while keeping the comfort and security of residents, staff and the surrounding communities in mind. Thank you again for your contributions, the future looks bright!

### Governor’s Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Members

Member	Department	Phone
Fran Agnes	American Ex-Prisoners Of War	425.742.5547
Oria Berndt-VAAC Chair	Non-Commissioned Officers Association	253.535.5656
Brownie Braunsteiner	Veterans of Foreign Wars	253.475-4830
Dale Colbert	Washington Veterans Home	360.895.4495
George Edmundson	Vietnam Veterans Of America	360.856.2023
Robert Harcum	Military Order Of The Purple Heart	509.248.9305
Frank Hensley	The Retired Officers Assoc.	360. 943.0456
Charles Karczewski	Paralyzed Veterans Of America	425.774.2153
Dick Kirk	Member At Large	360.638.2823
Richard Marin	Member At Large	425.778.3762
Rupert Markham	Washington Soldiers Home	360.893.4539
Ray Miller	National Association For Black Veterans	206.772.3386
Ronald Springer	American Merchant Marines	360.832.4339
Michele Vickery	Disabled American Veterans	206.246.8953
Robert Westphal	American Legion	360.387.8352

The next VAAC meeting is scheduled for Jan 8, 2002, at 9:30 a.m., at the Olympia Center, 222 North Columbia, Olympia, WA. For more information call 360-725-2153.



## ■ *Veteran Advocates* from page 1

tireless work with helping veterans is spurred by the motto of the American Ex-Prisoners of War: “to help those who cannot help themselves”.

**Dennis Brown**, of Seattle, received the Outstanding Male Non-Veteran award. Brown is an outreach worker and chemical dependency counselor with the Veterans Independent Enterprises of Washington. He can be found at standdowns, homeless shelters or anywhere he needs to go to locate homeless veterans and direct them towards the services they deserve.

**State Senator Bob Oke**, 26th district, was honored as Outstanding Legislator. Oke, a 26 year U.S. Navy veteran, is a member of the Joint Committee on Veteran’s and Military Affairs, as well as a tireless advocate for veterans.

**The Gospel Outreach Choir** of Olympia was awarded the first Outstanding Youth Patriotic Service Award.

For the past five years, the choir has been an integral part of the state’s annual Korean War



Ruth Cunningham is awarded the Outstanding Female Non-Veteran award.



VAAC Chairman Oria Berndt presents Dennis Brown his distinguished award.



Sen. Bob Oke (center) received the Outstanding Legislator award for 2001.

Veterans Memorial Wreathlaying as well as numerous other veterans’ events. In addition, the choir performs annually at the state capitol’s “Moment of Remembrance Candlelighting”, as well as the Christmas tree lighting.

The honorees were presented these awards Nov. 10, at a luncheon at the Auburn Elks Lodge following the Auburn Veterans Day Parade.

Nomination forms for next year’s awards can be obtained from the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs by calling (360) 725-2153.



The Outstanding Youth Patriotic Service award is presented to the Gospel Outreach Choir of Olympia. Choir Director Bonnie Ketron, her husband Tim and son Timmy, accepted the award from John King, WDVA Director.

## *Information and Assistance Available to Public*

Over the last several months WDVA Veterans Community Service Coordinators have conducted 13 Information and Assistance Fairs throughout the state.

These fairs are part of an effort to bring services directly to the more than 649,000 veterans in Washington state.

WDVA’s Program Manager, Richard Stewart, believes the Information and Assistance Fairs give veterans a better opportunity to file compensation and pension claims, and provide access to advocates at the Federal Veterans Affairs offices in Seattle.

Please call 1-800-562-2308 for an Information and Assistance Fair schedule or view it at [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov).



Local veteran service representatives were on hand to assist at the Wenatchee fair.

## **Information and Assistance Fair Schedule**

**Kingston**  
Jan 11 11am-6pm  
VFW Post #7329  
26096 West 1st St

**Auburn**  
Jan 14 8am-8pm  
Green River College  
12401 SE 320th

**Yakima**  
Jan 18 9am-3pm  
VFW Post #379  
118 S. 5th Ave

**Ellensburg**  
Feb 9 9am-4pm  
Central WA University  
400 E. 8th St

**Olympia**  
Feb 11 8am-8pm  
South Puget Sound  
Community College  
2011 Mottman Rd SW,

**Forks**  
Feb 22 11am-6pm  
VFW Post #9106  
S. Spartan Ave

**Retsil**  
Mar 8 11am-6pm  
WA Veterans Home  
1141 Beach Dr.

**Tacoma**  
Mar 11 8am-8pm  
Tacoma Community  
College  
6501 S. 19th St

**Bellingham**  
Mar 23 10am-5pm  
American Legion  
1688 W. Baker View Rd

**Steilacoom**  
Apr 8 8am-8pm  
Pierce College  
9401 Far West Dr. SW

**Richland**  
Apr 12 9am-4pm  
VFW Post #7952  
1369 George  
Washington Way

**Port Angeles**  
Apr 12 11am-6pm  
The Armory Mall  
228 W. 1st St

**Pasco**  
Apr 26 10am-5pm  
National Guard Armory  
127 W. Clark St.

**Oak Harbor**  
Apr 27 10am-5pm  
Senior Center  
51 SE Jerome St.

## *Reaching Women Veterans Through Wellness Fair*

A new approach to reaching out to women who have served in the military was demonstrated during the first Women’s Wellness Fair held September 29 at the Catholic Community Services Center in Tacoma.

Nationwide, veterans in need of services are often reached through Veteran Stand-Downs. However, women veterans, whose issues are profoundly different from their male counterparts, have been reluctant to seek services at a traditionally male Stand-Down.



The first Women’s Wellness Fair held September 29 at the Catholic Community Services Center in Tacoma.

That’s why Susan Avila-Smith, herself a veteran, founded Women Organizing Women, a group dedicated to helping women veterans access the benefits and services they are entitled to. Smith focuses on helping military victims of sexual trauma wade through the federal VA paperwork, a task often made more difficult when the applicant is afflicted by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Approximately 30 vendors were on hand greeting veterans with warm smiles and a helpful attitude. Women were offered a variety of services, to include assistance with VA programs – provided by the American Legion – information from the Veterans Independent Enterprises of Washington (VIEW) and the Tacoma Veterans Center, and massages & relaxation methods. Brochures on County Veterans Assistance Funds, Chaplain Services, Women’s Ministries, and Assault & Abuse Help Line were made available.

Cherise McArthur – a WDVA Veteran Community Services Coordinator and co-organizer of the event – indicated the women veterans in attendance showed considerable interest for future Wellness Fairs. “Providing a forum with female service providers and an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding, is proving to be an effective way to reach women veterans,” McArthur said.

Smith echoed the response adding, “My hope is that we can duplicate this type of event in other areas around the state, so all women veterans feel comfortable knowing they have an advocate.”

Women veterans who would like more information on services available to them are encouraged to contact Georgia K.E. Vitense, Women Veterans Program Coordinator with the VA Puget Sound Health Care System, at 206-764-2441.





## VA Appoints Trowell-Harris as Womens' Director

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has named Dr. Irene Trowell-Harris as director of the Center for Women Veterans, based in Washington.

In her new position, Trowell-Harris will be the primary advisor to Principi on programs and issues related to women veterans.

"I am very excited about working with Secretary Principi to improve services for women veterans," Trowell-Harris said. "Times have changed. Today there are 1.4 million women veterans living in the United States. Women comprise 15 percent of the active-duty military, 16 percent of the reserves and 20 percent of new recruits. I look forward to the challenges ahead, and plan to make sure VA has programs in place that provide benefits and meet their health care needs."

Trowell-Harris served in the United States Air Force and Air National Guard (ANG) retiring with 38 years of service as a major general.

*Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, News Release Oct. 16, 2001.*

## VA Upgrades Preparedness Program

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has launched a major effort to strengthen its support for emergency preparedness efforts.

"VA's emergency preparedness plans were tested on Sept. 11, and they stood up to the challenge," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "VA has been called upon to do more — more to protect veterans and employees, more to support the nation's emergency response."

Principi approved creation of an Office of Operations and Preparedness. The new office will assume responsibility for VA's Emergency Operations Center and Office of Security and Law Enforcement. It will also oversee VA's readiness and emergency activities, work with other federal, state and local agencies on emergency-related issues and serve as VA's primary liaison with the new Office of Homeland Security.

"In all of these efforts, a prime consideration is ensuring minimal disruption for our veterans and our families," Principi said.

*Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, News Release November 14, 2001.*

## Legislative Bills

### HR 2620, Veterans Funding

- The conference report on H.R. 2620 increases total spending for veterans by \$3.2 billion dollars, including a \$1.3 billion increase for VA medical care, one of the largest in history.
- Provides a 16 percent increase in spending for the Veterans Benefits Administration to remedy the backlog of compensation claims.
- Provides \$100 million for Veterans State Extended Care Facilities, \$50 million over the President's request.

President Signed, November 26, 2001.

### H.R. 2716, the Stuart Collick—Heather French Henry Homeless Veterans Assistance Act,

would authorize the VA Secretary to establish ten new domiciliary programs to serve homeless veterans.

- Authorize a set-aside of 500 additional section 8 housing vouchers for rental assistance for each of the next four years.
- Authorize appropriations of \$60 million for FY 2002 for the VA's Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program, and \$75 million annually for 2003-2005.
- Direct the Secretaries of Labor and the VA to undertake a demonstration program at a minimum of six penal and other long-term institutions to determine the costs and advantages of providing counseling on health care, benefits and job placement to veterans soon to be discharged from long-term institutional care.

Passed the House on October 16, 2001; pending in the Senate.

### H.R. 3240, the Reservists Education Protection Act,

protects educational benefits for servicemembers called to active duty, reassigned or relocated in the war on terrorism.

- Extends, for a member of a reserve component who was called to active duty, the period during which the Reservist may use his or her VA educational benefits by the length of active service plus four months.

Passed the House November 13, 2001; pending in the Senate.

### H.R. 3253, the National Medical Emergency Preparedness Act of 2001,

establishes four or more new National Medical Emergency Preparedness Centers at VA medical centers to:

- Conduct medical research on and develop health care responses for chemical, biological, and radiological threats to the public;
  - Provide related education, training and advice to VA and community health care professionals; and
  - Provide rapid response laboratory assistance to local health care authorities in the event of a national emergency.
- Authorizes \$100 million over five years to fund the new centers.

Introduced November 8, 2001.

### S.1447, Aviation Security Act.

- Gives military veterans who retired after a career in service a preference when it comes to filling the new private-sector and federal jobs created by the legislation.
- Boosts the number of federal air marshals on planes, strengthens cockpit doors, and raises training and performance standards for airport screening personnel;
- Allows for the hiring, training and deployment of a fully federalized force of screeners, managers, security personnel and law enforcement personnel within 9 months.
- Existing veterans preference rules and regulations are not affected by the provisions of this new law.

Became Public Law No: 107-71, 11/19/2001

## Secretary Signs Agreement to Fix Backlog of Record Requests

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi today announced an agreement between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) that is intended to reduce the pending backlog of more than 57,000 veterans' military records requested by VA.

"The president gave me a clear mandate to bring the unacceptably large number of claims in VA's compensation and pension programs to a fair and speedy resolution," said Principi. "To meet this mandate, VA needs the assistance and cooperation of NARA to obtain veterans' records in a timely and expeditious manner."

To provide benefits and services to veterans and their families, VA must determine whether those applying are eligible under the law.

VA expects that within one year the backlog of pending requests at NPRC will be eliminated. This will help facilitate timely decisions on all veterans' claims. Currently, VA has a national inventory of more than 668,000 compensation and pension claims pending. Of these claims, 53,000 have been awaiting a decision for more than one year.

*Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, News Release November 7, 2001.*

# In The News

## Governor Protects Citizen-Soldiers Rights

By SGT John Queen, 2122nd GSU, 70th RSC, USAR

When needed, the President of the United States has the authority to call Reservists and National Guardsmen to active duty by means of a Presidential Selective Reserve Call-up (PSRC). A state governor has this same authority in a regional emergency, but may only call upon the National Guard of that state. Whether it's raging wild-fires, erupting volcanoes, flooding rivers or riots in the streets of Seattle, the citizen-soldiers of the Washington Air and Army National Guard have always been there to answer the governor's call.

Although most employers understand the critical role played by the reserve component of our military, there have been instances in which Guardsmen or reserve soldiers have lost their jobs as a result of a call to temporary active duty.

Since 1994 re-employment rights have been guaranteed by the Federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). So why was a new law needed?

Until the signing of the new legislation a gap existed in the re-employment rights of Washington's Guardsmen. USERRA provides protection only for a call to *federal* service. Unlike the members of the US Army Reserve, Guardsmen may also be called to *State* Active Duty (SAD). Prior to Washington State Substitute Senate Bill 5263 becoming law, a Guardsman who lost his or her job as a result of SAD had no guarantee of re-employment following the call up. Now, under Washington law, Guardsmen are guaranteed re-employment, whether they are called to federal or state active duty.

Recent SAD events include assistance to local law enforcement during the World Trade Organization civil unrest, and assistance to local fire fighters during the wildfires that swept across central Washington last Summer. "Our men and women who choose to serve in the National Guard and provide our community with disaster relief during times of crisis should not have to worry about whether they'll have their civilian jobs when they return from protecting our lives, property and business," said Governor Gary Locke.

Doug Sayan, former State Representative (35th District) and the current Chairman of the authoring committee - the Washington Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), developed this bill with other members of the ESGR committee and pushed through the 2001 State Legislature. Mr. Sayan and the ESGR received vigorous backing by Senator Sid Snyder (Majority Leader) and Rep. Kathy Haigh (member, Joint Committee on Veteran's & Military Affairs). "The legislation signed this week is one of the first of its kind in this country to give all our Guard and Reserve troops equal protection when called to protect our state or country," said Mr. Sayan. "Our committee, through the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, will work to place this model legislation into other states that face the same lack of support for their local National Guard forces." The Washington State Committee for ESGR is part of a Department of Defense organization that works with employers, reservists, military leadership, and the Department of Labor to build and maintain a strong base of support for our Reserve and National Guard forces. With help and resources from the National Committee, ESGR initiates employer support programs, including speaker's bureaus, ombudsman programs, visits to Reserve/Guard training sites and legislative initiatives in support of the employer/military relationship. In a related ceremony earlier in the year, key Washington employers were recognized for their outstanding efforts to support the National Guard through the ESGR program: Almar Watercraft and Boeing were among those recognized.

Over the past decade, America's increasing dependency on Reserve and National Guard Forces to fulfill it's disaster relief, humanitarian and defense roles are placing greater demand on the citizens and family members who serve as "twice the citizen," as civilians and part-time military (citizen-soldiers). For civilian employers, this demand translates into the need for corporate support for the greater good of our community and country. The Department of Defense has designated 2001 as the Year of the Employer. For more information on the ESGR program, call (253) 512-8468.

## Washington National Guard's Role In Operation Enduring Freedom / Noble Eagle

The Washington National Guard has activated approximately 250 soldiers and airmen to augment airport security in 10 regional airports statewide. These soldiers have received training from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in addition to specific military briefings.

The mission of the National Guard is to assist local authorities to increase the level of airport security in order to help reduce the risk to lives and property, and to help restore the public confidence in air travel.

Along with these soldiers, approximately 130 Guardsman are conducting security and protection duties at Washington Military facilities. Approximately 460 Air National Guardsmen and 25 Army National Guardsmen are assisting directly with Operation Enduring Freedom.

All of the soldiers currently on duty either with Operation Enduring Freedom or Noble Eagle have been activated by the President and are on federal status.

## VA Unveils Plans for National Museum Honoring Veterans

WASHINGTON - Plans for a museum dedicated to America's veterans and their accomplishments were unveiled in the nation's capital hosted by the museum's chief proponent, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"Our nation's veterans have made tremendous contributions to our country and its history," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "This new museum will tell that story to generations of Americans, both born and not yet born."

The National Veterans Museum, to be located in the District of Columbia at VA's headquarters building at 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, will tell a story of homecoming: the universal experience shared by every soldier returning from every war, and the challenges they face as they return to family, friends, and community.

Exhibits will discuss the impact on American society of such seminal events as the Bonus Army of 1932 and the G.I. Bill of 1944. Other exhibits will explain the role of the Department of Veterans Affairs and its missions, and the many innovations for which VA employees are responsible.

Principi plans to link the museum with the Capital's great veterans memorials, including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; the Korean Veterans Memorial; the Women in Military Service to America Memorial; and the World War II Memorial, which is currently under construction.

He proposes interactive learning areas for visitors, and places set aside for lecture and discussion. His "highest priority," however, is to create a site for students of all ages to visit, along with their parents and teachers.

VA noted that a timetable has not yet been prepared for construction of the museum, but that a contractor, Lord Cultural Resources Planning and Management, Inc., has been retained to assist in museum planning.

*Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, News Release November 8, 2001.*

## VA Will Continue Enrolling All Veterans in Health Care System

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will continue to enroll all veterans in its health care system for next year.

"I thank President Bush for his leadership and am delighted that Congress and the White House are working together to find the money that will ensure veterans now and in the future have access to high quality health care," Principi said.

Principi said VA had looked closely at the possibility of limiting future enrollments for veterans who had no service-connected medical problems, whose income exceeded the low-income threshold and who were not already enrolled.

*Source: Dept. of Veterans Affairs News Release November 30, 01*



## Veterans of all eras speak at the New Market Skill Center

Nov. 7, 2001: Schools across the state provided Veterans Day programs to honor veterans and educate students. New Market Skill Center in Tumwater had students prepare questions for veterans of WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm.



Ben Pineda did 4 tours of duty in Vietnam. Andrew Clark served in Saudi Arabia during Desert Storm. Pineda and Clark are both Veterans Benefits Specialists with WDVA. Donna Botello served in the WACs during Korea. John Creighton, a Bataan Death March survivor of WWII, is a member of the American Ex-POWs.



**Centennial Elementary honors veterans  
among their families and friends on Nov. 9**



(Left ) Parade Coordinator Ernie Elmore (left) with Parade Marshal Chris Navarra, WWII Veteran.



## Veterans Day

**Olympia Veterans Day Parade  
Monday, Nov. 10**

## Senior Services for South Sound Host Program Nov. 8



**American Legion and Fort Lewis  
Military Band are Featured Guests**





## 1st Annual Veterans Appreciation Dinner

Nov. 18, 2001: St. Martin's Pavilion in Olympia hosted more than 700 veterans and their families at the first annual Veterans Appreciation Dinner, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, Masons and the WWII Educational Foundation.



WDVA executives shared laughter and companionship with residents from the Veterans Home at Retsil.



Medal of Honor recipient Robert E. Bush provided keynote address.



MG Timothy Lowenberg, Adj. General of Washington's Military Department, poses with MOH recipient Bob Bush and WWII Navy veteran Bernie Gilbert.

Nov. 11, 2001: The Veterans Memorial Museum in Centralia celebrated their fourth anniversary and Veterans Day with an open house, complete with cake and tours.

Right – Museum director Lee Grimes (L) with WWII veteran and tour guide Ernie Keiper of Winlock.



## Centralia Veterans Day Celebration

Nov. 10, 2001: American Legion Posts 17 and 22 of Centralia and Chehalis hosted Lewis County's annual Veterans Day Service in Washington Park.



Photos (top to bottom) – Local boy scouts presented flowers to all veterans attending.

AL Chehalis Post 22 provided the firing squad.



## WA Soldiers Home Program

The Washington Soldiers Home and Colony held its annual Veterans Day Ceremony on Sunday, Nov. 11.



Lt. Col. Daniel J. Stoehr, commander of the 62nd Operations Support Squadron at McChord Air Force Base, was the keynote speaker.



VFW Chaplain greets home residents and members of Boy Scout Pack 37, who presented the home with an American flag.



(Left) Asst. Superintendent Venessa Gaston with VFW dignitaries.

## Spokane Veterans Home Program



A small ceremony was held in the dining room at Spokane Veterans Home on Veterans Day.



Resident James Kimble visited with North Central High School students before accepting a gift basket on behalf of the Spokane Veterans Home during their Veterans Day Ceremony held on Friday, Nov. 9.



Betsy Jennings was named Resident of the Year.

## WA Veterans Home Program

(Right) Jim Coolican, Peninsula School District Superintendent, was the keynote speaker.



VFW Aux. members await the announcement of the 2001 Veterans Day Queen Joan Watte.



Stars and Stripes song and dance troupe performed several patriotic numbers.



# Veterans Home

## University of Washington Partners with Social Workers at Homes

Social workers at Retsil and Orting have teamed up with the University of Washington at Tacoma, to provide first year students working on their Master of Social Work program an opportunity to experience first-hand what it means to work with veterans in a geriatric setting.

Begun last year with one student at each facility, this year's program has expanded to include two students at Orting and one at Retsil, under the supervision of Sharon Rinehart and Quindola

Crowley, social workers at the facilities.

Each student spends 320 hours over a nine-month period at a veterans home recording initial histories, learning assessment skills and completing special projects. All tasks are closely supervised and co-signed by staff.

In addition to the valuable partnerships being formed with outside educators, Rinehart said the benefits of having these students on-site are numerous.

"The residents enjoy the one-to-one contact the students can provide," said Rinehart. "Staff is benefiting, because new ideas and new theories are being brought to their attention. It also provides us with an opportunity to look at ways to continually improve the lives of our residents."

Rinehart stressed that these students – who undergo the same background check and employment requirements as employees – are not staff

substitutes, but do provide an enhancement to the social work program. Her hopes are to attract second year students interested in the program, because their Masters requirements would allow them to spend 720 hours at the home over a nine month period. This would enable them to work with the residents the equivalent of two days per week, enhancing the program for everyone.

### Spokane Couple Celebrates 40 Years Together



Harvey and Myrna Biegert at their 40th Anniversary Party, held Saturday, November 17th.

Captain Harvey Biegert met Second Lieutenant Myrna Berry in early spring of 1961 at Minot AFB, North Dakota. They were married in mid-November of that year in Ohio, near Myrna's home. As the regulations required at that time, Myrna was discharged when she became pregnant.

During the next few years, Harvey had several assignments; McClellan AFB, Langley AFB, a tour in Vietnam and Fairchild AFB. He retired from Fairchild AFB in November of 1974.

After retirement, he and Myrna made their home in Spokane and continued raising their three children, daughter Kelly, and two sons, Harvey and Gregory. The two sons presently live in Spokane and the daughter and her family are in Missoula, Montana. After retirement from the Air Force, Harvey completed his college education and was then employed by the state of Washington. He retired from State employment in the summer of 1996.

Myrna became ill in January of 1999 and was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) the summer of that year. It is the affects of MS which brought Myrna to the Spokane Veterans Home.

### Two Home Residents Celebrate 100th Birthday

Julia Hale, who has lived at the Soldiers Home on and off for over 20 years, celebrated her 100th Birthday on November 30.

Throughout her years, Julia has enjoyed going on all the trips, especially the ones to Reno years ago. She attended many Bingos and Black Jack games, as well as all the Reno Day programs each year. Julia has also held several work therapy jobs, like helping out at the nurses station answering phones. She's been an active resident with energy to spare.

Several family members and friends visited with her on her special day. Worn out from all the excitement, she posed for one more picture with her special friend Lynn Zemke, Activity Director.

At the Veterans Home in Retsil, Stella "Cookie" Erickson celebrated her 100th Birthday on November 27.

Over 30 members of her family joined the festivities, along with her many friends living at the home.

Cookie and Julia both received letters from President Bush, congratulating them on reaching such a milestone.



Julia Hale of Orting, celebrates 100th Birthday.



(Above) Cookie (right) with her friend Bea Kreger, who will celebrate her 100th Birthday next April.



(Left) The many family members attending Cookie's 100th Birthday Party.



## Street Talk...

with residents of the  
WA Soldiers Home

*What was the best New Years Resolution you ever made?*



"I quit smoking for one year."  
--Mildred Norton



"Getting out of 'Nam' unhurt."  
--Louis Wofford



"Not to get married. But I made that resolution after I was already married. Then, I got married a second time. Guess I didn't keep that resolution too well."  
--Roger Nikrandt



"I never made one. That way, I couldn't break it."  
--Ray Ford

## Volunteers ARE Making a Difference at the Soldiers Home

Volunteers from the KeyBank Operations center in Auburn spent Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> at the Washington Soldiers Home and Colony in Orting, as part of Key's annual "Neighbors Make the Difference Day."

Employees from Key's Auto Finance Collections department, On-Line Banking department and the Technology department, spent the afternoon taking residents on a riverwalk through Orting. Other volunteers assisted the staff preparing lunch and while serving beverages, had the opportunity to visit with residents.

After lunch, volunteers spent time cleaning out the flower beds around the nursing building, collecting eight bags of leaves and debris.

"The KeyBank volunteers had a wonderful day," said KeyBank's Kristen Carter. "The event will be remembered for quite some time."

KeyBank volunteers are already looking forward to doing it again next year!



Volunteers from the KeyBank Operations center in Auburn spent Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> at the Washington Soldiers Home and Colony in Orting, as part of Key's annual "Neighbors Make the Difference Day."

## New Benches for Veterans Home Cemetery



The Kitsap Master Gardeners Club and Soroptomists of Port Orchard donated two benches for the WVH Cemetery.

Earlier this year, the Master Gardeners provided a new look to the two flowerbeds, and have been maintaining them throughout the seasons.

Several volunteer groups also worked in the cemetery, clearing out old trees and replanting new ones.

## Make a Difference Day

Fort Lewis shows its spirit



On Oct. 27, volunteers from the 502nd Military Intelligence Battalion worked, in the rain, on the grounds of the WA Soldiers Home. Some volunteers also hung pictures in residents rooms. All took the time to visit with their fellow veterans during the day.

Fort Lewis soldiers, family members and civilians adopted 61 projects, stretching from Orting to Olympia and included a wide variety of activities.

## Bremerton Volunteers Renew Magic of Holidays for Residents

Retsil residents spent the latter part of November making "wish lists" for the holidays, which were then filled by the Assistant Project Superintendent Association and the Crane Division Recreation Committee.

Last year, USS Alaska Project and Crane members provided three gifts to each of the residents at Retsil, with presents ranging from calendars, to warm shirts, to a box of Ding-Dongs - all items that were on the residents "wish lists".

The success of last year's project produced a renewed excitement among residents, who this year put in much time and thought to come up with items for their lists. The knowledge that many caring and special volunteers really would be reading the lists and doing their best to provide the residents with a special Holiday, have many residents looking forward to the Holiday party on Dec. 21, when the gifts will be distributed. One resident even had staff take her shopping in November for a new dress, so she will be ready for this year's party.



# Vietnam Veterans of America

*Promoting the self-respect, self-confidence, and usefulness of Vietnam-era veterans.*

## History



In Service to America

The Vietnam Veterans of America, founded in January 1978, was initially known as the Council of Vietnam Veterans. By the summer of 1979, they had transformed into a congressionally chartered veterans service organization made up of Vietnam veterans whose goals were – and are today – to promote and support the full range of issues important to Vietnam veterans.

Membership growth was slow for the first few years, until the nation's dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in November 1982. The Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. believes "the week-long activities rekindled a sense of brotherhood among the veterans and a feeling that they shared an experience that was too significant to ignore."

Today's VVA has over 50,000 members, governed by a national board of directors and national officers, with 43 state councils coordinating the activities of its 525 chapters. By promoting legislation and public-awareness programs, the VVA's stated purpose is to "promote the educational, economic, health, cultural, and emotional readjustment of the Vietnam-era veteran to civilian life."

According to Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., national efforts by the organization have resulted in the development of programs for incarcerated Vietnam veterans, leading the fight for full accounting of POW/MIAs, working with homeless veterans, and the creation of the U.S. Court of Veterans appeals.

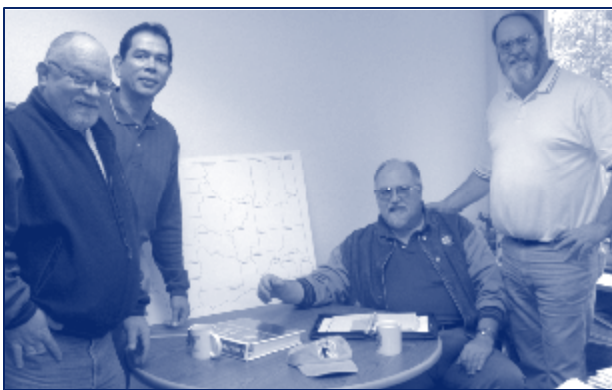
For additional information on The Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. visit their website at <http://vva.org> or call 1-800-VVA-1316.

## The Vietnam Veterans of America has 12 Chapters in the State of Washington

"The primary focus of the VVA in Washington state is veterans benefits," said State President Jimmy Grissom. "We have 17 members who have received accreditation as National Service Officers, which I believe is the most from any one service organization in Washington."

The VVA service officers file approximately 150 claims per month on behalf of Washington veterans, and according to Grissom will continue to improve and expand their programs to assist veterans.

For additional information on Washington's VVA programs, contact Jimmy Grissom at (509) 747-3833 or Kenny Johnson at (206) 220-6731.



(Left to Right) Jimmy Grissom, VVA State President; Alex Deluao, WDVA Benefits Specialist; Kenny Johnson, Chairman Veterans Assistance service Group; and Jim Rising, WDVA Grants & Contracts Manager.

### VVA Chapters in Washington State

For information on becoming a member, contact a chapter president in your area:

Seattle Chapter #102	Debra Wood	(206) 205-6500
Bellingham Chapter #165	Ray Lewis	(360) 676-9865
Concrete/Granite Falls Chapter #212	Bob Garrison	(360) 873-4516
Yakima Chapter #225	Don Baker	(509) 882-1522
Bellevue Chapter #319	Kenny Johnson	(425) 430-2018
Tri-Cities Chapter #335	Guy Lobdell	(509) 943-0246
Snohomish-King Chapter #423	Bob Weslander	(206) 481-0716
Vancouver Chapter #512	Ron Gish	(360) 944-9102
Ellensburg Chapter #514	Dave Bowlin	(509) 972-2107
Moses Lake Chapter #686	Eric Johnson	(509) 764-0454
Auburn Chapter #690	Andy White	(253) 735-7385
Spokane Chapter #879	Charlie Gumm	(509) 535-8678

## Vietnam Veterans of America Present 2001 Bronze Boonie Award

Doug Tolmie, producer of the Emmy-Award winning series Dogtags on KOMO-TV4, has been awarded the Glen A. Williams Memorial Bronze Boonie Award, given by the Washington State Vietnam Veterans of America.

Begun in 1988 as a tribute to Vietnam veteran Glen A. Williams, the award is given to individuals who have made a significant and sustained contribution to the veterans community and their families.

The responsibility and honor of choosing a recipient for the award belongs to the last Bronze Boonie award holders. The award is not necessarily given out every year, but can be held until its current "owner" finds the next special person to receive it.

Tolmie received the award from the previous recipients, Pam and Roger Young, creators of the on-line newsletter for veterans, The Northwest Veterans Newsletter <http://members.aol.com/bear317/nwvets.htm>.

In a news release provided by the Youngs, the many contributions to veterans made by Tolmie included the following recognition:

"The rare public broadcasts about veterans, all done with great respect, sensitivity and dignity are – indeed – Priceless.

"It is indeed our honor, and privilege to proudly present to our friend and "brother", who has and continues to serve our country well – "a man who has moved mountains" – Doug Tolmie, the Glen A. Williams Memorial Bronze Boonie Award."

The award, which consists of Glen's bronzed boonie hat mounted on a wooden plaque, was presented Nov. 12 at KOMO-TV4.



# In The Spotlight

*"Serving Those Who Served" takes on new meaning when the service provider and recipient share a similar background. At the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the number of employees who are veterans ranks high, providing a personal connection with clients not always achieved in other agencies.*

*In an effort to introduce these dedicated employees, WDVA will highlight a different veteran/employee each issue.*

**Ben M. Pineda**, Veterans Benefits Specialist/Counselor, has worked with WDVA for eight years.

Born and raised in Angeles City, Philippines, Ben began his military career in 1965. His father was a Filipino Scout under General MacArthur during WWII, so the U.S. Army was Pineda's service of choice. During the next 27 years, his career took him from Infantryman, Military Policeman, Recruiter, and then as the Correctional (Assistant Warden) Sergeant Major with the Regional Corrections Facility, Fort Lewis. In 1989, as the Sergeant Major of the Military Police Command, Fort Clayton, Panama, he lead his



Ben Pineda

soldiers during the invasion of Panama, and later retired from active duty in Sept. 1992.

From Jan. 1967 to July 1969 and again from Dec. 1969 to July

1971, he completed four combat tours in Vietnam. When asked why he volunteered for the additional tours, Pineda explained he believed that because he made rank so quickly he would have a greater chance of retaining his rank in a combat situation than in stateside duty because of the language barrier.

Pineda earned the following awards and decorations during his military career: Combat Infantryman Badge, Legion of Merit, 2 Bronze Stars, 3 Meritorious Service Medals, 4 Army Commendation Medals, 3 Army Achievement Medals, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Vietnam Service Medal, and Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 Device.

A graduate of the Sgt. Majors Academy, Pineda also received his B.S. in Social Science from the University of the Philippines. In addition to speaking Filipino and English, he is also proficient in Vietnamese.

Ben and his wife, Pat, live in Olympia and have three children. Daughter Patti is serving in the U.S. Air Force Avionics Field at Travis AFB in California. Middle daughter Lani is a pre-med student at Baylor University in Texas, where she is attending on a full Air Force R.O.T.C. scholarship. Their youngest daughter Frances will graduate this year from River Ridge High School, and then enlist in the U.S. Air Force and pursue her career goal of becoming a nurse.



"The Magnificent Seven" Camp Eagle, Honduras



Ben Pineda as a "Rookie" MP in Saigon Vietnam.

## Upcoming Events

Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee Meeting  
Jan 8, 2002 - 9:30 a.m.  
Olympia Center  
360-725-2153

Commanders' Call  
Jan 10 - 10:00 a.m.  
Fort Lewis Golf Course Clubhouse  
360-725-2167

VFW Mid-Winter Convention  
Jan 19-20, 2002  
Yakima Convention Center  
253-922-2114

American Legion Mid-Winter Convention  
Feb. 1-3, 2002  
Spokane Doubletree in the Valley  
360-491-4373

Massing of the Colors  
Feb. 17, 2002  
Soldier's Field House-Ft. Lewis  
3:00 p.m.

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans Week  
Feb. 10 to Feb. 16, 2002

Social Work Month  
March 2002

American Red Cross Month  
March 2002

Congressional Medal of Honor Day  
March 25, 2002

Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day  
April 9, 2002

## WDVA Employees Complete U.S. DVA Program Training

Nine WDVA employees have successfully completed training in a new program called Training, Responsibility, Involvement, and Preparation of Claims (TRIP).

Veterans Benefits Specialist Dick Venesky, received his certification in TRIP-Level 2. The other eight WDVA VBSs received certification in TRIP-Level 1.



Dick Venesky, central office



Darrell Perry, Orting



Willie Slusarski, Bremerton office



Valerie Chu, Retsil

(Left to right)  
Mac Harris, Sharon Lindley, Barb Logan, Jim Green, and Alex Deluao, all central office staff.



## Jane Adamson Retires



WDVA Deputy Director, John Lee, applauds Jane Adamson's years of service to veterans. Adamson, a Korean War Veteran, served as a Veterans Benefits Specialist at the American Legion service office at American Lake. She holds the distinction of being the first female state commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Washington.



**Tats Off!**



#### WDVA salutes the Tahoma National Cemetery Honor Guard volunteers

In addition to spending Monday through Friday of each week providing military funeral honors for veterans, the Tahoma National Cemetery Honor Guard volunteers have recently initiated a special monthly program to provide proper military funeral honors for indigent veterans or veterans that did not have a service at their time of internment.

On the last Saturday of each month, at 11:00 a.m., volunteers from participating Veteran Service Organizations hold a military funeral service for those individuals interned without a service, during the previous month.

For information on the monthly service, call Bernie Moskiwitz at (206) 772-6285.



Pearl Harbor survivor Roy Minick and his great-granddaughters, Haley and Lindsey, wait in anticipation to light the "Tree of Remembrance" in the Capitol Rotunda. The lighting of the tree coincided with the 60th Anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7.

#### ■ **Pfannenstiel** *from page 1*

services operations after documenting fewer veterans seeking assistance in WDVA field offices, despite recent increases in the state's veteran population. Data indicated the existing system was not reaching a large enough number of veterans or addressing the shifting needs of those veterans.

Stewart and Pfannenstiel agree that the key to reaching more veterans is involving the communities where they live.

"I have a desire to help veterans," said Pfannenstiel. "A lot of good things that have happened to me since I left active duty came about because of the help I received from a veteran at the Disabled American Veterans office here in Oak Harbor. Getting out there and meeting with veterans, families and providers is working, and I'm committed to continuing that effort."

Pfannenstiel will be establishing links between veterans - and their dependents - with homeless services, employment services, community mental health assistance, health care and transitional housing, as well as benefits and services provided by the state and federal Departments of Veterans Affairs.

Veterans and family members in these counties can contact Pfannenstiel at (360) 257-4801 or e-mail him at [pfannenstielg@naswi.navy.mil](mailto:pfannenstielg@naswi.navy.mil)

#### STATE OF WASHINGTON



#### Joint Committee on Veteran's and Military Affairs – 2002

**Senator Rosa Franklin**  
(425) 739-6114 (District)  
(360) 786-7656 (Olympia)  
e-mail: [franklin\\_ro@leg.wa.gov](mailto:franklin_ro@leg.wa.gov)

**Senator Jim Kastama**  
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**Senator Bob Oke**  
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**Senator Marilyn Rasmussen**  
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**Senator Dan Swecker**  
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**Representative Geoff Simpson**  
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**Representative Gigi Talcott**  
(360) 786-7890 (Olympia)  
email: [talcott\\_gi@leg.wa.gov](mailto:talcott_gi@leg.wa.gov)



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